

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	312
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	ACAPS
Titel:	Update: Syria
Udgivet:	22. december 2012
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	15. januar 2013

UPDATE: SYRIA Conflict



This document is an update of the June 2012 Syria DNA which can be found [here](#).

Crisis Overview

After 21 months, the conflict in Syria has spread to all 14 Governorates and an estimated four million people have been affected by the crisis, either directly or indirectly. Fighting between Government forces and armed opposition groups continues to escalate, with both sides increasingly making use of heavy weaponry in populated areas. The rapid deterioration of the situation since June is reflected in the number of people fleeing Syria: in June 2012 UNHCR, while the number currently stands, refugee population is believed to be much higher than previously, with many refugees unable or unwilling to register.

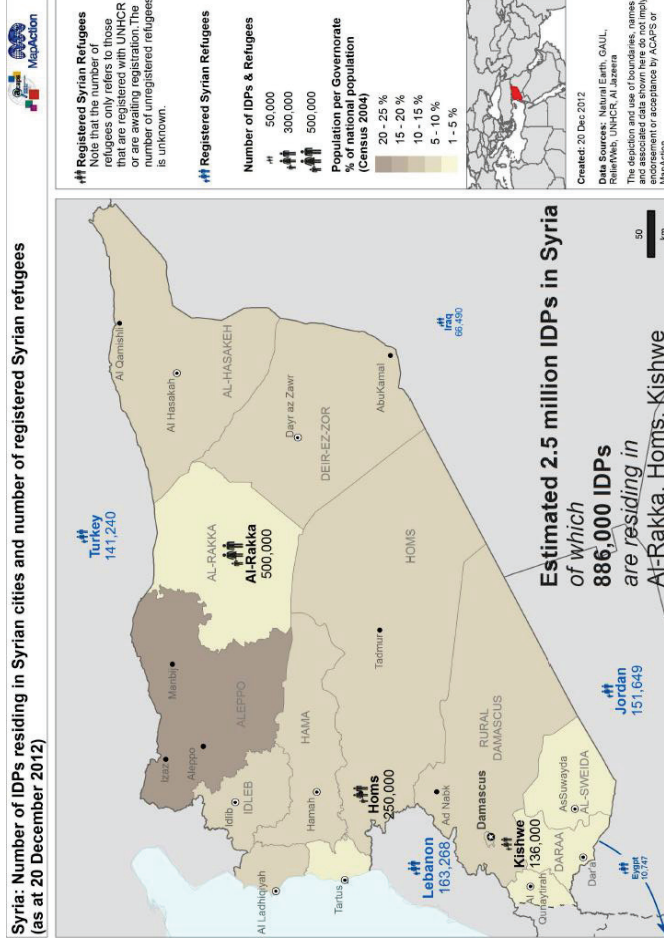
Most affected areas

All governorates are impacted by the on-going fighting, violence and internal displacement. It is currently not possible to prioritise areas based on the limited information available.

number of people fleeing Syria: in June 2012, 77,000 people were registered with UNHCR, while the number currently stands at 450,000. The actual size of the refugee population is believed to be much higher, as an unknown number of refugees are unable or unwilling to register.

With anti-Government armed groups taking control of areas in the northern and central provinces, the country is becoming increasingly fragmented. There has been a surge in sectarian violence. The number and scale of human rights violations has grown, with continuing reports of ill-treatment of detainees, gender based violence and child-recruitment. As the winter is setting in, the situation is expected to worsen.

Moreover, humanitarian access remains limited, with assessments and relief operations being hampered by the widespread insecurity. As a result, it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of the humanitarian needs in the country, although the information which is available implies a deteriorating of the humanitarian situation. Although cross-border trade has continued, blockades, insecurity, sanctions and a lack of fuel have hampered the movement of basic commodities. As a result of a combination of the violence, drought and large scale displacement, food prices have soared and fuel is hard to come by. Access to adequate health services is a large concern.



Priority concerns

- Access for humanitarian organisation to the people in need has decreased since June 2012.
- Unemployment, price increases and inflation has impacted the purchasing power of communities. Between March and September, the number of people in need of emergency food assistance has increased from one to 2.5 million people.
- Access to health care services remains a problem and there are severe shortages of medicines and pharmaceutical products. Lack of access to safe drinking water and appropriate sanitation has led to an increased risk of waterborne diseases.
- 2.5 million people are currently displaced and are reportedly in need of adequate shelter, NFIs and protection. Temperatures will remain low (below 10 degree Celsius) until the end of January.
- Extrajudicial executions and ill-treatment of detainees, including torture, is widespread. Indiscriminate attacks, including the use of cluster munitions, are widespread and the increasingly sectarian nature of the conflict puts minority groups at risk. In addition, GBV and child recruitment are major protection concerns.

Information Gaps and Needs

- Information on the specific areas under attack and neighbourhoods under siege as well as information on the distribution of control over the different areas.
- Displacement trends, numbers of IDPs, their priority needs and their locations.
- Priority needs of host communities.
- Situation and location of migrants and refugees in Syria, particularly the 520,000 Palestinian and one million Iraqi refugees that were in Syria before the start of the crisis.
- Information on the level of food insecurity per governorate, disaggregated per group (displaced, host community etc.).
- Information on the extent of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Nutritional status of the population.
- Protection concerns of minorities.
- Health concerns for those not covered by the current health reporting system.
- There is a lack of information on the humanitarian situation in the eastern governorates of the country.
- Limited information is available on on-going and planned assessments.

Operational Constraints

Humanitarian Access

- Although more humanitarian actors were able to enter Syria, insecurity, violence against humanitarian personnel and impediments to entry have increased over the last three months.
- In addition to the UN, only eight INGO's are allowed to operate in Government-held areas in Syria. In November, OCHA requested access for ten additional NGOs. However, as of yet, the Syrian Government has not granted this access (UN 2012/12/18).
- Several INGOs, such as MSF, operate in the rebel-held areas of Syria without Government permission (MSF 2012/12/12).
- There are reports of international aid sent to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) being confiscated by the regime and not reaching civilians in need. This was, however, denied by WFP and ICRC. SARC has come under increasing

pressure in terms of their ability to maintain access to all parts of the country. (AlertNet 12/12/14, AFP 12/11/07).

- Access of the affected population to humanitarian assistance is restricted mostly due to blockades, curfews, active hostilities and conflict-related damage of the infrastructure. Both Government troops and rebel groups have cut off movement in and out of certain areas to control the supply chains, thereby disabling population movement (AFP 2012/11/26).

Coordination and assessment

- In rebel held areas, Local Coordination Committees (LCCs) have been established to substitute Government services. Coordination between these LCCs seems to be lacking and fragmentation and lack of leadership impede the information flow and identification of needs (PI 12/12/13).
- With little access to the field and significant constraints for humanitarian actors to operate in the country (difficulties in obtaining visas, ban on using questionnaires or organizing surveys, restrictions on coordination), assessing the needs remains a major challenge. To date, the localisation of the vulnerable populations affected by the crisis, the understanding of their needs and the identification of the beneficiaries is for a large part done by the SARC, supported locally by charities and communities, with few possibilities for the international aid agencies to assess and monitor needs and operations (ECHO 12/12/02).

Insecurity

- Security incidents targeting the on-going aid distribution have increased (UNHCR 23/11/2012). Humanitarian aid convoys have increasingly come under attack in recent weeks, sometimes caught in crossfire, but sometimes specifically hijacked for their goods or the vehicles themselves. Mortars have landed and shoot-outs have taken place in the proximity of UN offices (IRIN 12/12/03).
- 18 volunteers of SARC and eight UN staff members have been killed since the beginning of the conflict. (IRIN 12/12/03).
- On 1 December, UNDSS issued several recommendations including evacuation of non-essential international staff and temporary suspension of all missions to Syria and within the country until further notice. Consequently, the UN has sent all non-essential international staff out of Syria and halted all field trips outside of Damascus as of 18 December (WFP 12/12/01, OCHA 12/12/18).
- UN agencies are relocating staff from the northern town of Aleppo. Outside of Damascus, at least one UN agency remains present, dependent on Syrian staff, in Al-Hasakeh, Qamishli, Al-Rakka, Tartous, Latakia, Homs, Hama, Daraa, Aleppo and Rural Damascus (IRIN 12/12/03).
- For two-thirds of the month of November, UN security considered several main routes in the country, namely from Damascus to Homs, from Homs to Aleppo, from Hama to Tartous, from Aleppo-Latakia, unsafe for travel, or stated that

there was not enough information on the security situation to enable staff to travel on these roads (IRIN 12/12/03). Internal UN procedures further impede operational movement in the face of insecurity (IRIN 12/12/03).

- Road access to and from Damascus has become more dangerous, making it difficult to dispatch commodities from warehouses to some parts of the country - particularly to the north. The supply disruptions have obliged UN organisations to increasingly resort to international procurement (UNHCR 12/12/17, WFP 12/12/04).

Logistics and lack of fuel

- Significant fuel shortages have caused delays to aid convoys and aid distribution (OCHA 12/12/12, DRC 12/11/27, BBC 12/12/18).
- Due to the closure of main routes in many of the main cities, and the inaccessibility of certain urban neighbourhoods, congestion hampers the mobility of humanitarian actors (Jesuit Refugee Service 12/12/18).
- Securing trucks for distribution and aid operations has become more expensive and difficult (UN 12/12/18). While Tartous and Lattakia ports remain operational, the lack of trucks and frequent diesel scarcity in Tartous governorate impede the supply chain (WFP 12/08/25).
- Shortages and increases in fuel costs have affected the majority of the country and major cities. Therefore, a fuel depot with a capacity of 70,000 litres has been established in Damascus to serve the WFP light vehicle fleet. If needed, the depot can be utilised by other UN agencies, implementing partners, and commercial transporters (WFP 12/09/01). A new logistic hub has been established in Safita and the Qamishly warehouse is operational (WFP 12/11/26).
- With regular interruptions in voice and data communication, unreliable telecommunications hamper humanitarian operations (WFP 12/08/18).

Recommendations for Further Assessments

- Rapid multi-sectoral assessment in accessible conflict affected areas. Displaced populations can function as key informants on the situation in non-accessible areas.
- Mapping of on-going and planned assessments (Survey of Surveys), information sharing and joint analysis.
- Where possible, IDPs and refugees profiling, indicating their exact location and needs.
- Sex and age disaggregated data is needed to improve the analysis of specific needs of sub-groups of the population.
- Establish price monitoring system, including price levels in neighbouring countries.
- Increased sharing of information between actors in Syria, including Government sources.
- Establish a humanitarian profile working group to provide best estimates on affected population figures and solve current inconsistencies. Precise and regularly updated school dropout figures could provide accurate estimates on number of affected population.

Humanitarian Profile

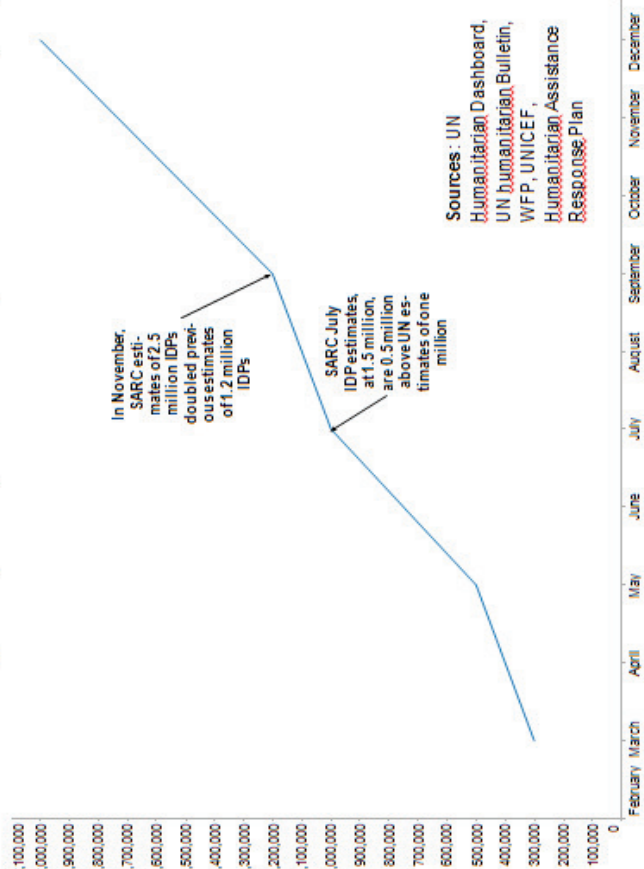
About this humanitarian profile: after more than 20 months of conflict there is a large amount of figures available on those displaced and affected by the Syria crisis. This profile intends to outline the trend and limitations of this information. The information is structured around the 'humanitarian profile' as defined by the Inter Agency Standing Committee in 2011. A humanitarian profile attempts to account for the type and number of people having humanitarian needs arising from a given emergency.

Humanitarian Caseload - Trends and Limitations

Displacement in Syria

- **Number:** As IDMC states, 'given the nature of the conflict and the lack of access in Syria, the IDP figures have remained estimates derived from formal registrations and based on both the pattern of the conflict and the displacement trends' (IDMC 2012/08). As a result, a large part of the displacement is likely to be unreported. This is reflected in the different figures published over time. In May 2012, 500,000 people were reportedly internally displaced. By the end of July, the figure had increased to one million, further increasing to 1.2 million by the end of September. At the start of November, the SARC more than doubled these

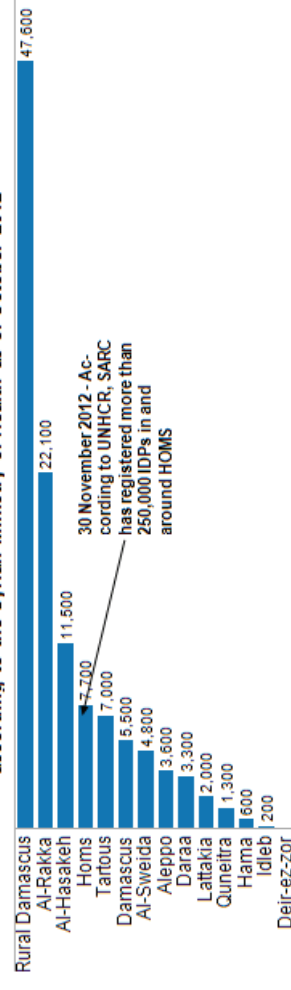
Number of IDPs in Syria as reported by the UN and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)



estimates to 2.5 million. This trend does not follow conflict patterns, for instance, while in August heavy fighting spread to the populous cities of Aleppo and Damascus, this did not trigger an increase in reported displacement figures presumably because of a lack of information.

- **Location:** Apart from a map published by IDMC reflecting general displacement flows, there is scarce information available on exact location of IDPs and their place of origin.
- At the beginning of the conflict, two displacement trends could be witnessed. Most Syrians fled to communities with a common ethnic or cultural background and the displacement flows were primarily rural-urban, or urban-urban. However, as fighting spread, the main urban areas were no longer considered safe havens and many were forced to move repeatedly. Consequently, secondary and tertiary displacement outside of these patterns became common and therefore displacement trends have become less predictable (IDMC 2012/08).
- Some information on displacement patterns can be derived from the place of origin of refugees in neighbouring countries. In Lebanon for instance, the majority of new arrivals originates from Homs (60%), while a large part of Syrians residing in Jordan fled from Daara (45%) (UNHCR 2012/10/23, UNHCR 2012/11/30).
- In October 2012, the Syrian Ministry of Health published figures on location of 117,000 IDPs. However, as this number only includes those residing in public shelters, the large majority of IDPs are not captured within the figures.

Number of IDPs residing in public shelters according to the Syrian Ministry of Health as of October 2012



- Further to the SARC and Syrian Government sources, international humanitarian actors which are still operating in Syria function as a source for IDP figures and locations.
 - While implementing a large scale vaccination campaign, UNICEF for instance reported that vaccines originally intended for Deir-ez-Ezzor governorate have been redistributed to Al-Rakka and Al-Hasakeh, as the

vast majority of the population from Deir-ez-Ezvor has fled to those two neighbouring governorates (UNICEF 2012/12/07).

- WFP recently reported that the governorates of Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Al-Rakka host the highest number of *newly* displaced people. According to WHO, approximately 500,000 IDPs have sought refuge in Al-Rakka during the last three months and now make up 35% of the governorate's total population (WHO 2012/12/10, WFP 2012/12/04).
- The NGO 'People In Need' estimates that only one to two million of Aleppo's original four million inhabitants remain (AlertNet 2012/12/14).
- According to the local authorities, an estimated 25,000 Syrians are residing across the border at Kilis (about 6,000) and Hatay (19,000) provinces (UN 2012/12/08).

Other displaced groups

- Over 520,000 Palestinian refugees were residing in Syria before the crisis. Fighting in and around Palestinian neighbourhoods and camps has led to displacement of these refugees:
 - Intensive clashes in Yarmouk camp and adjacent areas, which are home to approximately 160,000 Palestinian refugees, have led to large scale displacement in December 2012. UNRWA reports that as many as 100,000 Palestinians may have fled Yarmouk (UNRWA 2012/12/16, AFP 2012/12/20).
 - Over 1,000 Palestinian refugees from Ein el Tal camp in Aleppo fled to surrounding villages and Hama due to clashes in the immediate vicinity of the camp (UNRWA 2012/12/16).

- An unknown number of migrants from neighbouring countries were working in Syria before the start of the conflict, some of them for a long period of time. Since November 2011, 6,845 migrants from 43 countries have requested IOM evacuation assistance to safely return to their country of origin (IOM 2012/12/13). Although there is no information available on the situation of those that have not requested support from IOM, it is expected that most of them have returned to their home countries and could be facing difficulties with regards to re-integration.

- Despite the hardship and insecurity in Syria, many poor residents reportedly do not leave their place of residence because of the winter conditions or because of a lack of resources. Movement for men of fighting age is limited as they have difficulties crossing checkpoints. Some cities are in complete lockdown, with no movement possible (Reuters 2012/12/14).

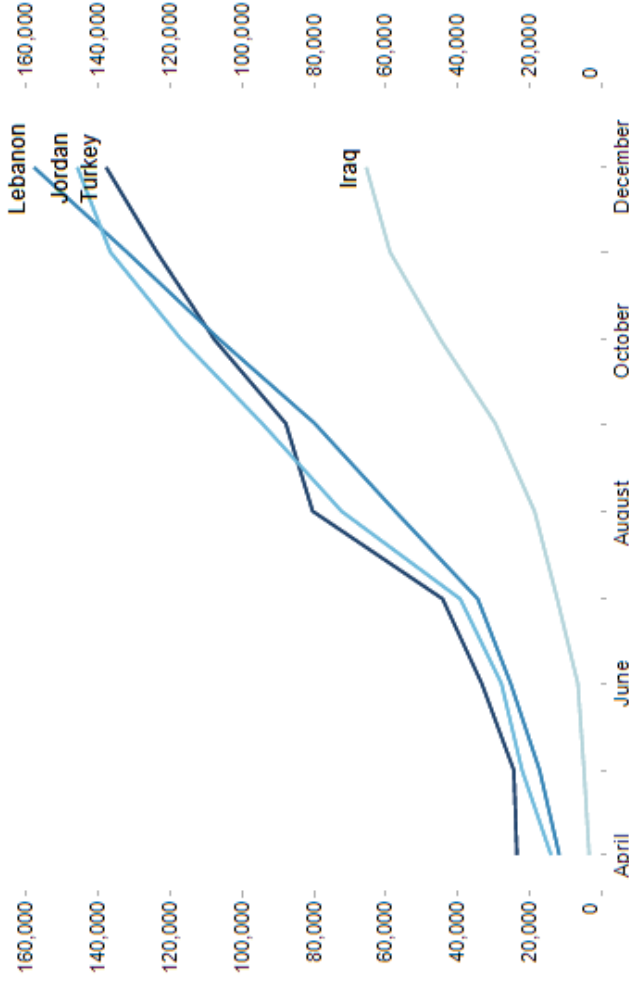
- **Disaggregation:** Sex or age disaggregated information on IDPs is not available. In October 2012, the UN reported that the only estimate of displaced children in Syria (600,000) was outdated (UN 2012/10/19).

Displacement outside Syria

Refugees (registered and unregistered)

- **Number:** As of 18 December 2012, 531,376 refugees were registered or awaiting registration in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. This figure refers to all refugees who have registered with UNHCR or are awaiting registration (UNHCR 2012/12/12). However, the actual number of refugees is believed to be much higher as an unknown number of refugees have not registered, including those who:
 - are unwilling to come forward and reveal their identity or location for fear of reprisals - some Alawites have for instance reportedly refrained from registration out of fear for being seen as traitors to the al-Assad regime;
 - are unable to reach registration offices due to a lack of resources;
 - are unaware of the need for registration, including those refugees who are currently not in need of support.

Refugees (registered and awaiting registration) per country
UNHCR data portal



Please note that trends are not only influenced by the influx of refugees but also by UNHCR's capacity to register refugees.

- Further factors are distorting the published figures. Some refugees have reportedly returned to Syria, in order to participate in the fighting, protect property or because of discontent with the situation in the refugee camps. In Jordan, at least 6,000 refugees have voluntarily returned to Syria ^(CSM 2012/12/06). Return has not consistently been captured in the official UNHCR figures.

- On 29 November 2012, around 2,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria were registered in Jordan and 9,600 in Lebanon. Apart from this, there is little information available on location of the 525,000 Palestinian and estimated one million Iraqi refugees that were residing in Syria prior to 2011.

Syrian refugees and other displaced groups per country

Lebanon

- 168,268 Syrian refugees have been registered in Lebanon or are awaiting registration as of 19 December 2012. However, Caritas estimates that there is more than double this number in Lebanon that are not yet registered, especially in the south of the country ^(CARITAS 2012/11/21).

- Some Syrians obtained residency coupons in Lebanon and the Lebanese Government recently decided to waive the fee for Syrians wishing to renew these. In addition, refugees who entered through unofficial border crossings can present themselves to the GSO to regularize their status ^(UNHCR 2012/10/19).

- The Lebanese Government wants to avoid setting up official camps for Syrian refugees. As a result, the majority of Syria's refugees are scattered across more than 540 locations in northern Lebanon (52% of registered refugees) and the Bekaa Valley (40%) with smaller numbers around Beirut and in the south. ^(UNHCR 2012/10/04, UNHCR 2012/12/19).

- Until now, many new arrivals have found accommodation with host families, especially in northern Lebanon, where family ties between Lebanese and Syrians across the border are strong, in apartments and rooms to rent, or in collective shelters such as schools. A small proportion of the refugees are staying in tents or shelters of their own making ^(UNHCR 2012/10/04).

- Secondary movement is significant in Lebanon, impeding the monitoring of refugee locations: with the start of the harvest season in the south of Lebanon, some refugees are for instance moving southwards in search of employment.

- **Migrants:** Between 150,000 and 300,000 Syrian migrants are currently working in Lebanon. These workers are typically single males without family presence. However, many workers are currently bringing their families and relatives to Lebanon. The migrants are often working in low-wage jobs, particularly in the construction sector, and will have difficulties supporting their families. As the

Lebanese economy is heavily impacted by the Syrian conflict (for instance the construction sector is down by 13%), it will be increasingly difficult to sustain their livelihoods and, as a result, it is expected that more and more of the Syrian migrants will require support ^(UNHCR 2012/12/18).

Jordan

- As of 20 December 2012, 151,649 refugees have been registered or were awaiting registration in Jordan ^(UNHCR 2012/12/20).

- The Government established multiple transit facilities, Cyber City and King Abdullah Park, as well as a tented camp in the northern governorate of Ma'raq (Za'atari). Around 30,000 Syrian refugees are residing in Za'atari camp. Since it opened in July, there have been several demonstrations by refugees, protesting against bad living conditions at the camp ^(AFP 2012/09/24). A new camp site "Mreijeb Al-Fhoud" is under development and sites for an additional three new camps still need to be identified ^(RI 2012/12/05, CARE 2012/11/15).

- The large majority of refugees currently reside in urban settings. Since they are scattered across the country, they are hard to locate ^(CARE 2012/11/15).

Turkey

- According to the Government, a total of 141,240 Syrian refugees are accommodated in 14 camps. More than 15,000 people registered in Ceylanpinar and Akcakale camps are staying with their relatives in the nearby villages with permission from the camp officials ^(UNHCR 2012/12/17).

- Syrian refugees in Turkey have been accorded 'temporary protection status'. Under the terms of this temporary status, the Turkish authorities guarantee an open-border policy which allows Syrians to cross into Turkish territory, assurance against forcible return to Syria, and access to basic reception arrangements where immediate needs can be addressed ^(RI 2012/12/05).

- All the camps are managed by the Turkish Government. So far, the UN involvement in the camps has been limited, at the request of the Turkish Government. Access for humanitarian organisations to the camps is limited. However, it is generally acknowledged that the Government is providing adequate services and acceptable living conditions. Overcrowding could increasingly become an issue as the total number of Syrians registered in 14 camps exceeds the official capacity of these camps by 12% ^(UNHCR 2012/12/17, UNHCR 2012/12/08, ECHO 2012/12/02, RI 2012/12/05).

- There is no officially-accepted data on how many Syrians are living outside the camps in Turkey. This is partly because refugees in a community setting cannot

register for assistance, and partly because some do not want to come forward and reveal their identity or location. The UN Country Team estimates that there are between 60,000 and 70,000 unregistered Syrians. Unregistered refugees are mostly located in the border provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep and Saniurfa (UN 2012/12/03, STL 2012/11/30, UN 2012/12/06, STL 2012/11/30, RI 2012/12/05).

Iraq

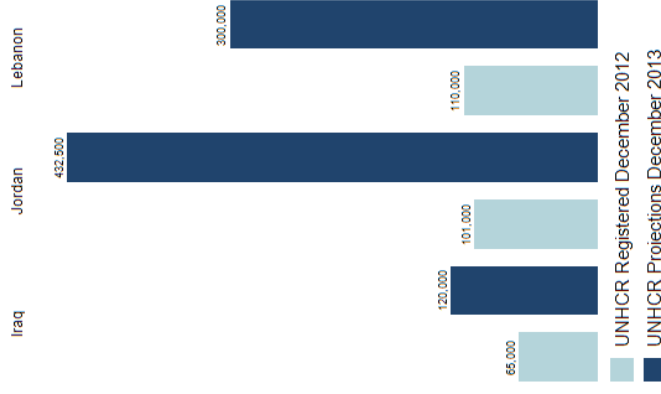
- As of 19 December 2012, around 66,000 refugees were registered with UNHCR in Iraq. The majority of Syrians in Iraq have fled to the three governorates of Iraqi Kurdistan – Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah.
- At the Rabi'a border crossing in northern Iraq, Syrian Kurds are automatically considered refugees and are given documentation and humanitarian assistance by the Iraqi Kurdish authorities. The Kurdish authorities are granting six-month renewable resident permits to the refugees, which allow them to look for work. (ECHO 2012/09/20, MSF 2012/11/21). The Al-Qaim border crossing point remains closed, with only emergency cases or family reunification cases being granted access (UNHCR 2012/12/05).

- The camps Al-Qaim and Domiz have been established to shelter the refugees, in Anbar and Dohuk governorates. Construction in Kasak camp in Mosul governorate is on-going. 18,000 refugees are residing in Domiz camp in Dohuk and around 7,000 in Al-Qaim camps (UNHCR 2012/12/05, UNHCR 2012/12/14).

- Nearly half of the registered Syrians live outside of the camps, mostly in urban areas (UNHCR 2012/11/23, RI 2012/12/05).

- **Iraqi returnees:** As at 5 December, the total number of Iraqis crossing into Iraq since 18 July 2012 is 58,213, including around 6,000 who have by air. Statistics collected at the border continue to indicate that Baghdad is receiving the largest number of Iraqi returnees, followed by Anbar and Ninawa (UNHCR 2012/12/05).

UNHCR Refugee projections December 2013
UNHCR Global Appeal



- Cross border movements are common, with Iraqi's crossing in and out of Syria to obtain their UNHCR assistance or to sell property (UNHCR 2012/12/05).

Egypt

- According to UNHCR, since July 2012, a monthly average of 20,000 Syrian refugees has arrived in Egypt. A total of 10,747 refugees were registered by 18 December 2012. The majority of them are believed to be residing in Cairo and in Alexandria. Egyptian officials however, reported that there are as many as 150,000 Syrians in the country. Many have not yet sought assistance or registered with UNHCR. This may be due to their having sufficient means of their own, or being reluctant or unable to come forward (WFP 2012/12/01, WFP 2012/12/01, UNHCR 2012/10/23, UN 2012/12/19).

- The Government of Egypt has maintained open borders to Syria since the start of the crisis. There are no visa requirements for Syrians to enter Egypt; they are granted three-month visas upon arrival. After the initial three months, individuals are required to regularize their stay in the country through the Department of Immigration of the Ministry of Interior (WFP 2012/12/01).

- Syrians reportedly flee to Egypt instead of to neighbouring countries because of existing community ties in the country, their unwillingness to be hosted in camps (as in Jordan, Iraq or Turkey) and the high cost of living in cities in Jordan and Lebanon (UN 2012/12/19). Of the registered refugees, 51% are male and 49% are female and over 45% are under 18 years old (UNHCR 2012/12/20).

- Until June, Syrian families arriving in Egypt were predominantly middle class and relatively well off. However, since June 2012 the number of large families arriving with limited financial resources has increased and many are residing in poor neighbourhoods (WFP 2012/12/01).

- **Disaggregation:** Detailed disaggregated information on the registered refugee population is available on the UNHCR data portal. According to the UNHCR data, 49% of the total population registered in the region is male while 51% is female. 27% of the registered refugees are <18. There is no information available on the gender and age of unregistered refugees.

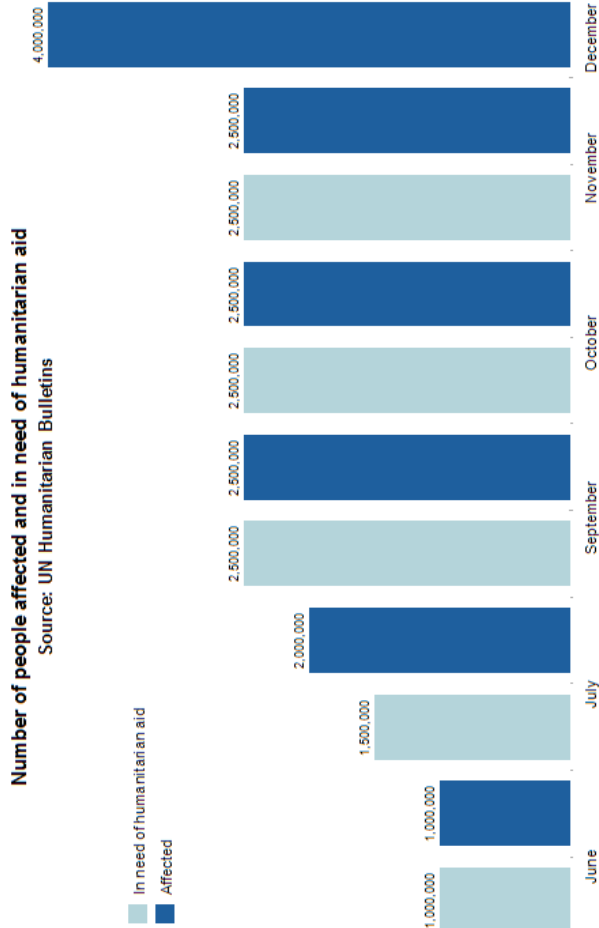


- **Outlook:** As there is no end to the conflict in sight, UNHCR projections estimate that the total number of refugees could reach 700,000 by mid-2013. As assets

are depleted, it is likely that more refugees will come forward to request support (IRIN 2012/08/29, UN News Service 2012/10/08).

Affected

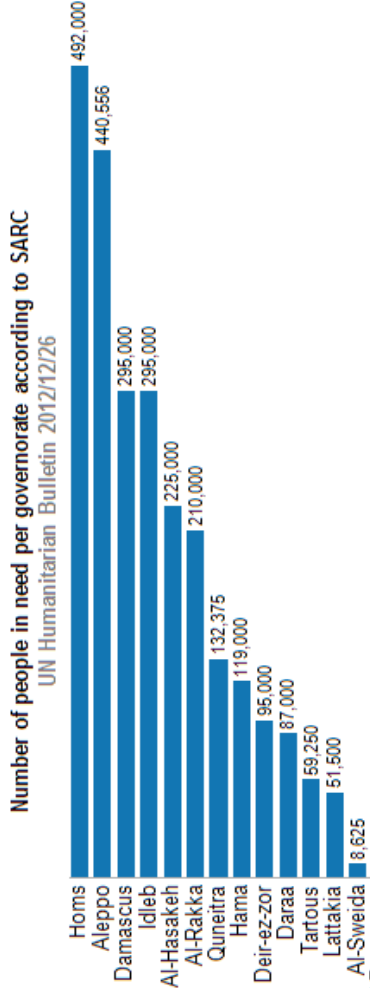
• **Number:** In the beginning of December, the UN stated that four million people require humanitarian assistance. This number was re-iterated in the December 2012 Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan for Syria. According to the Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan in June 2012, one million people were in need of humanitarian aid, while in September this number increased to 2.5 million. The number of people affected and those in need are used interchangeably by different sources. As can be seen in the graph, the number of those in need of aid follows the number of affected. As comprehensive needs assessments are unavailable within Syria, the numbers and localisation of those



affected is for the most part done by the SARC. As the Assistance Coordination Council (ACU), created by the Syrian National Council to coordinate relief and development activities in Syria, becomes more established, it could complement this information with data from the Local Coordination Committees. This new source of data can potentially provide a more holistic picture of the number and location of people in need.

• According to UNRWA, 360,000 out of the around 500,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria have been affected by the crisis and require humanitarian aid (OCHA 2012/12/12).

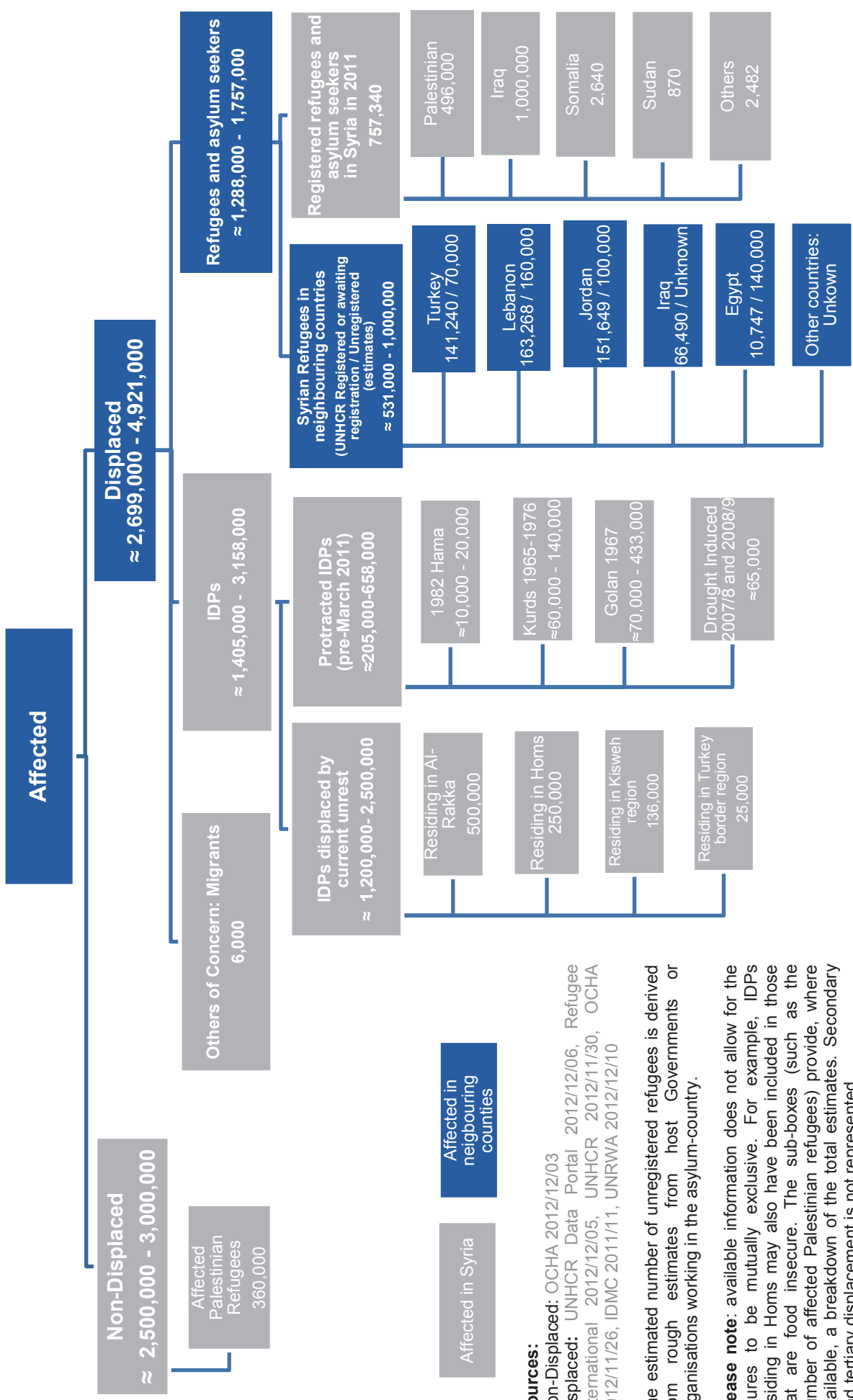
• **Location:** As of November 2012, through the Humanitarian Dashboard, the UN provides information on population in need per governorate, based on SARC reports.



• **Disaggregation:** Disaggregated figures on the number of people affected are scarce. In August 2012, the UN reported that around 1.1 million children <18, including 262,000 children <5, and 625,000 women of reproductive age have been affected in Syria (UN 2012/08/16). As of yet, these figures have not been updated. The current situation does not allow for disaggregation of the number of affected by group, for instance by host or non-host community.

• **Outlook:** According to the latest Humanitarian Dashboard, 1.5 million people are at risk of imminent food insecurity, in addition to the three million people who are already food insecure. As the worsening security situation in Syria is causing a humanitarian situation that is rapidly deteriorating, people will increasingly exhaust their coping mechanisms, relying more and more on humanitarian aid. Hence, the number of food insecure people will likely rise to 4.5 million in the upcoming months (OCHA 2012/12/17).

Humanitarian Profile



Sources:

Non-Displaced: OCHA 2012/12/03
Displaced: UNHCR Data Portal 2012/12/06, Refugee International 2012/12/05, UNHCR 2012/11/30, OCHA 2012/11/26, IDMC 2011/11, UNRWA 2012/12/10

The estimated number of unregistered refugees is derived from rough estimates from host Governments or organisations working in the asylum-country.

Please note: available information does not allow for the figures to be mutually exclusive. For example, IDPs residing in Homs may also have been included in those that are food insecure. The sub-boxes (such as the number of affected Palestinian refugees) provide, where available, a breakdown of the total estimates. Secondary and tertiary displacement is not represented.

Definitions for affected categories are available on the last page of this document

Stakeholder profile

Background and recent developments

- Since the uprisings against the Assad regime began in March 2011, the estimated conflict-related death toll has surpassed 44,000 people. A failed UN-backed cease-fire in October 2012—violated by both the Assad regime and rebel forces—was followed by high levels of violence in the second half of 2012 (CFR 2012/11/14; AFP 2012/12/12/19; CNN 2012/11/16).

- The Government forces remain numerically superior and better equipped than the opposition forces, although new weapons have bolstered the opposition capacities in 2012. Since July, Syrian armed forces have principally withdrawn from Kurdish controlled areas in the north, and recent developments witness increased rebel control over large areas in the east of Syria. Fighting in Damascus has intensified, as it became a focal point of battles in December (CFR 2012/11/29; AlertNet 2012/11/27; AlertNet 2012/12/09).

- In the east, the regime has lost territorial control of the region except for a stronghold in the city of Deir-az-Zor and its airbase. In the north, the regime withdrew from several Kurdish-majority areas in July 2012 and they have been under Kurdish control since. In December, Syrian rebels captured a northern regimental command centre of the army. The regime forces maintain only a few bases in the northeast of the country, and are unable to manoeuvre far from them (AlertNet 2012/11/20; BBC 2012/11/26; Global News 2012/12/04; AlertNet 2012/12/09).

- The recent gains by the rebels in the north and east have left the power of the regime concentrated in the south around Damascus and in the Mediterranean provinces of Tartous and Latakia - the traditional nuclei of Syria's Alawites. The coastal territory and Damascus are linked by Homs, which remains under divided control by Government and opposition forces (ISW 2012/11/9; GlobalNews 2012/11/28; AlertNet 2012/11/27).

- A political breakthrough in uniting the fragmented opposition was achieved in November 2012 with the establishment of a new opposition umbrella group, the *National Coalition for Revolutionary Forces and the Syrian Opposition*. The new coalition has received considerable national and international recognition (IISS 2012/06; CFR 2012/11/14; Global News 2012/12/04).

- The influence and military importance of Jihadist groups in the opposition has gradually increased in 2012. These groups are reported to have played a crucial role in taking over military bases in the north, as well as in fighting in and around major cities (ReliefWeb 2012/12/11; AlertNet 2012/12/09; ICG 2012/10/12)

National Actors

Syrian Armed Forces:

- The military forces of Syria consist of the Syrian Arab Army, Navy, Air Force, Air Defence Force, and several paramilitary forces. The *IISS Military Balance* report of March 2012, estimates the number of troops totalling 295,000 actives (Army 220,000 Navy 5,000 Air 30,000 Air Defense 40,000) and another 108,000 Paramilitary troops. Estimations in October 2012 pointed to figures closer to 200,000. An estimated 10,150–11,939 Government troops have died in battle since the beginning of the conflict (IISS 2012; BBC 2012/11/12; AFP 2012/11/22; ICG 2012/08/01).
- The Republican Guard and the 4th Armoured Division compose core components of the Syrian armed forces. The 25,000 strong Republican Guard, and the estimated 20,000 strong 4th Division have been critical in maintaining military control over Damascus, but have also been deployed to Homs and other strategically important locations (BBC 2012/06/30; France24 2012/04/03; IMRA 2012/11/28; ICG 2012/08/01).
- In early December 2012, reports surfaced that the Syrian Government disposed, and was moving stockpiles of chemical weapons, warning that they might be used against rebel groups. The reports were followed by warnings from numerous international actors. The Syrian regime has denied that any such weapons would be used (AlertNet 2012/12/07; BBC 2012/12/05)

Opposition groups

- **National Coalition for Revolutionary Forces and the Syrian Opposition (National Coalition):** In a meeting in Qatar on November 11, Syrian opposition groups agreed to set up a new and more inclusive 63-member leadership council. Led by the moderate Imam Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib, the coalition is hoped to provide a more unitary leadership, work as the opposition's main umbrella group, and provide a single channel for all financial and possibly military aid. It will also, administer areas controlled by rebel forces and plan for a post-Assad transition (CFR 2012/11/14; Economist 2012/11/17).
- The National coalition has been recognized as legitimate representative of the Syrian opposition and people by the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council, France, Turkey, Libya, UK, Spain, and EU, and the U.S. Mainstream opposition groups have generally welcomed the new coalition leadership, and so have several Islamist groups, operating in the north, which initially rejected the coalition. The Kurdish-Syrian party PYD continues to reject the coalition.
- The National Coalition requested help to bolster the opposition forces militarily through provision of anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles. The U.K., for instance, has stated it will not accommodate such wishes at this point, but that it will increase practical support for the rebels including training and equipment (AlJazeera

2012/11/12; ECHO 2012/11/19; Economist 2012/11/17; BBC 2012/11/20; Aljazeera 2012/12/12; CBS 2012/12/12; AlertNet 2012/12/06).

- **Syrian National Council (SNC):** The Syrian National Council is the previous promoted opposition main umbrella group. Its leadership role is now principally transferred to the new national council. Yet, leaders of SNC stated that it will remain an important actor and subsume under no one. The SNC advocates a transition by all legal means, as well as a democratic change in Syria (BBC 2012/11/12; SNC 2012/11/30; Economist 2012/11/17).

- **Free Syrian Army (FSA):** Formed in August 2011 by army deserters based in Turkey, the FSA is the main armed opposition group in Syria. The FSA has functioned primarily as an umbrella group for army defectors, civilians who have taken up arms and Islamist militants. Fighting factions allegedly have limited or no contact with each other or with the FSA's leadership situated in Turkey. However, many of the most important fighting groups acknowledge the FSA's leadership. The FSA has welcomed the leadership of the new National Coalition (ISW 2012/11/9; BBC 2012/11/12 Foreign Policy 2012/11/21; BBC 2012/11/20).

- The main part of the FSA fighters has had limited military training. Although the FSA claims to have more than 40,000 fighters under its command, analyst estimates suggest a figure closer to 10,000 fighters (CFR 2012/10/29).

- The initially ill-equipped FSA has recently obtained more sophisticated and heavier weaponry, either captured from army forces or smuggled in from abroad. In late November, reports surfaced of rebels seizing military bases and obtaining considerable military loot such as tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery, 120-mm mortars and rocket launchers (AFP 2012/11/25; ReliefWeb 2012/11/27; AFP 2012/11/25).

- Despite increased territorial control in large parts of the eastern and northern regions, the rebels have yet to seize control of a single major city, and continue to undertake pre-dominantly urban guerrilla tactics in cities under regime control (Aljazeera 2012/11/21; AlertNet 2012/11/27).

- **The National Coordination Committee (NCC):** NCC is made up of 13 left-leaning political parties, three Kurdish political parties, and independent political and youth activists. It differs from the SNC and the National Coalition in that it advocates dialogue with the regime on conditional withdrawal of troops, and strongly rejects the idea of foreign intervention in Syria. In late September 2012, the NCC endorsed the FSA for the first time. Although the NCC admits that the creation of the National Coalition is a step toward unifying the opposition, it does not yet represent the entirety of the opposition (AlertNet 2012/09/23; AFP 2012/09/02; CFR 2012/10/29; al-Monitor 2012/11/20).

- **Islamist, Salafist, and Jihadist rebel groups:** A plethora of Islamist, salafist and jihadist groups comprise a multifaceted and hard-defined component of the Syrian opposition and political map in general. These groups are geographically dispersed and operate from vast regions of the country. They range from moderately Islamist and secular, to salafist and jihadist with aspirations of establishing an Islamic state based on strict sharia (Foreign Policy 2012/09/12; ICG 2012/10/12; ISW 2012/09):

- o A large share of **Islamist** groups fight nominally under the flag of FSA but do not share its secular agenda. Moreover, an increasing number of previously secular groups have adopted an Islamist ideology, albeit falling on the moderate end of the spectrum. **Suqour al-Sham**, mainly operating in the Idlib governorate, is a principal actor in this category, publicly identifying itself as a unit within the FSA (ISW 2012/06/26; ICG 2012/10/12; NYTimes 2012/06/29).

- o Salafi-jihadist groups have become a growing part of the Syrian armed opposition. **Jabhat al-Nusra** (al-Nusra Front), allegedly affiliated to al-Qaeda, is one of the most prominent of these groups with between 6,000 - 10,000 fighters. The group is well-trained and has been bolstered by fighters from abroad and other factions. The group has admitted numerous suicide bombings in several major cities, and was recently declared by the U.S. as a terrorist body. Jabhat al-Nusra has recently gained strong influence around Aleppo and is reported to have played a major role in recent take-over of military bases in the north of Syria. **Ahrar al-Sham** is another prevailing battalion that has been particularly active in and around Idlib. (CBC 2012/12/07; Washington Post 2012/11/30; DNE 2012/12/06; AlertNet 2012/12/09; NYTimes 2012/12/10; Washington Post 2012/12/10).

- o Other al-Qaeda affiliated groups operating in Syria are al-Qaeda Syria, Abdullah Azzam Brigades, and al-Qaeda Iraq (ICG 2012/10/12; ISW 2012/09).

- The size of Islamist groups as share of the total armed opposition has grown steadily, and the FSA has expressed worries that the Islamist influence might pose a threat to the stability of the region and the credibility of the opposition's democratic ambition. An increasing tension between the sides within the opposition has been observed at several fronts (ICG 2012/10/12; Washington Post 2012/11/30; Forge Today 2012/08/07; Telegraph 2012/11/03).

- **Kurdish Rebels:** Exploiting the unravelling of the Assad regime's grip in large areas of Syria, Kurds have been asserting control in parts of the northeast, bidding for Kurdish self-rule. Main political actors are the PKK-affiliated **Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD)** and **Kurdish National Council (KNC)**. The groups claim to represent the Kurdish ethnic minority and seek autonomy or a federalist solution in the Kurdish regions of northern Syria (Reuters 2012/08/07; BBC 2012/07/27; CNN 2012/08/14).

- Militias serving the PYD and KNC have so far seized at least 15 towns and parts of Qamishli, as well as two districts of Aleppo city. The areas proclaimed under PYD control extend for 848 km from Al-Malikiyah in northern Iraq to Efrin, north of Aleppo. This western region under Kurdish control also coincides with the Syrian-Turkish border (BBC 2012/10/26; SundayTimes 2012/10/30; Iki 2012/10/25; ISW 2012/11/9).

- The recently created **Popular Protection Units (YPG)** compose militia groups that have played an increasingly large military role in Syrian Kurdistan. The group was founded by PYD and KNC and is responsible for maintaining order and protecting the lives of residents in Kurdish neighbourhoods (DailyNewsEgypt 2012/07/21; Reuters 2012/11/07).

- Kurdish sources say that over the last year, the PYD has transported around 4,000 to 4,500 Kurdish Syrian fighters from their stronghold in the Qandil Mountains in northern Iraq to the Syrian north. The total number of Kurdish fighters is unclear, but analysts suggest that a large number of Kurds (100,000 in the Aleppo province alone) could be mobilised (Iki 2012/10/25; AFP 2012/10/27).

- The Kurds have avoided explicitly taking sides in the conflict between the regime and opposition, benefitting from the power vacuum created. However, an emerging and escalating power struggle between opposition forces and the PYD has been occurring since mid-2012. The conflict stems from both ideological and political differences (TZ 2012/11/19; Aljazeera 2012/11/19; AFP 2012/10/27; CNN 2012/10/30).

International Actors

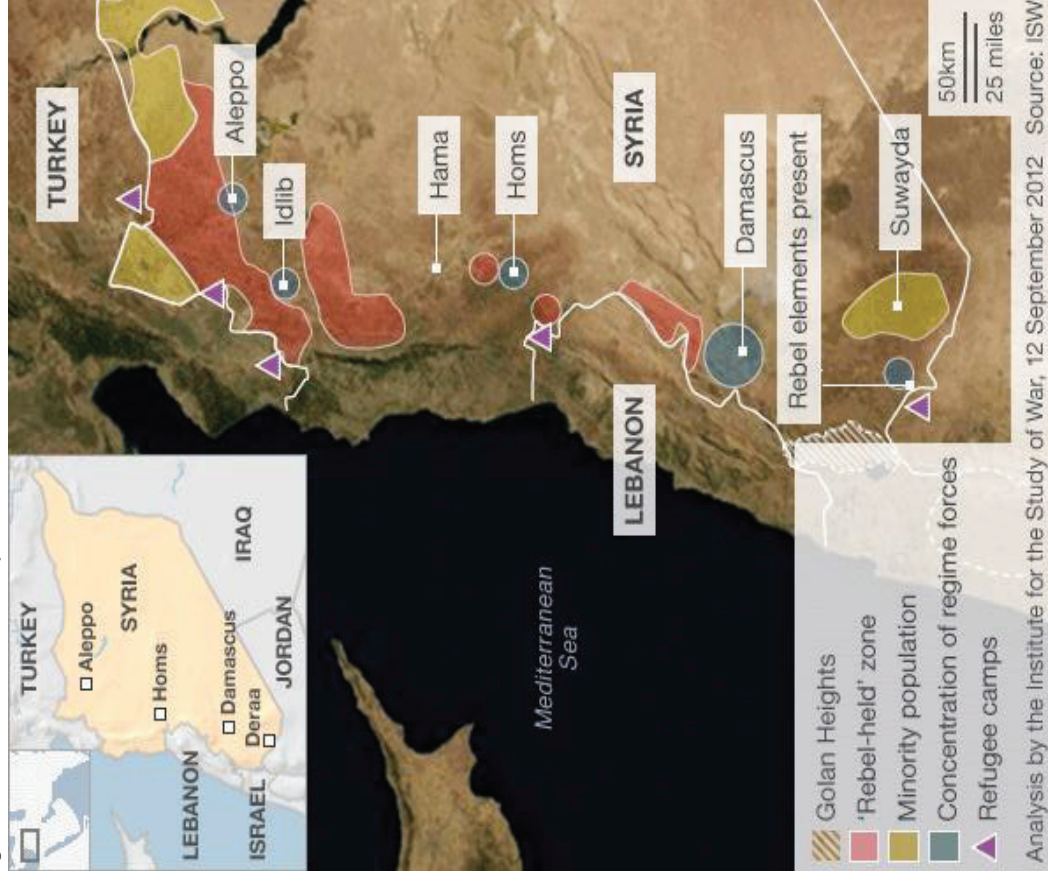
- **U.N.:** In September 2012, Lakhdar Brahimi, replaced Kofi Annan as the UN-Arab League special envoy to Syria. UN Security Council resolutions, attempting to isolate the Assad regime, have been vetoed by Russia and China three times, hence ruling out any strident measures sanctioned by the Council (CFR 2012/10/29; BBC 2012/11/20).

- **European Union:** EU Ministers said in a statement on 10 December that the "EU accepts as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people" the National Coalition. The EU has imposed a number of sanctions including assets freezing and travel bans, as well as an arms embargo on all fighting parties in Syria. The latter was recently extended until March 2013 (ECHO 2012/12/10; AlertNet 2012/12/03).

- **The Arab League:** The 22-member regional organization suspended the al-Assad regime in November 2011 and has imposed economic sanctions on it. In January 2012, the League officially called for President al-Assad to step down and requested a resolution from the UN Security Council in support. The League recently recognized the National Coalition as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people, and has given the Coalition observer's status in the League (CNN 2012/11/13; Aljazeera 2012/11/13).

- **NATO:** NATO has categorically rejected the idea of military involvement and deployment of troops in Syria. Nonetheless, on December 4 2012, NATO approved a request by Turkey to deploy American, German and Dutch Patriot anti-missile batteries along Turkey's border with Syria. For months, Turkey had expressed concerns about the potential of missile attacks from Syria as relations between the two countries have worsened (NYTimes 2012/12/03; NATO 2012/12/04).

- Latest map available (September 2012) about controlled areas is represented below. Situation might have changed since, as more fighting between opposition and government forces took place in the last three months.



Livelihoods and Food Security

Priority Concerns

- The number of people in need of emergency food assistance has increased to 2.5 million from an estimated one million in March and 1.5 million in October 2012
- Food insecurity is growing due to inflation, insecurity hampering mobility, increasing prices, and fuel shortages impacting transportation, food production and trade. Conflict affected areas are most affected with prices up to 50% higher than in less affected areas
- Livelihoods are eroding and unemployment has risen from 9% in 2010 to 25% in 2012, straining purchasing power. IDPs, urban and rural poor, pastoral and agro-pastoral households are particularly affected and their coping mechanisms have been exhausted

Livelihoods and Food Security

- According to a joint Rapid Food Security Needs Assessment by WFP/FAO, close to three million people are in need of food, crops and livestock assistance over the next three to six months, especially in areas that have seen the greatest conflict and population displacement. **The number of people in need of emergency food assistance has increased to 2.5 million, from an estimated one million in March.** In the next six months, this figure is estimated to double if the current situation does not improve and access to the affected population remains restricted (FAO 12/09/24, AFP 2012/12/18).
- The conflict has aggravated pre-existing vulnerabilities, especially among the urban and rural poor, with unemployment increasing in the formal and informal sectors and inflation and depreciation of the currency negatively affecting purchasing power (FAO 12/09/24).
- The total unemployment rate in the Syrian Arab Republic has increased from about 9% in 2010 to 15 % in 2011 and 25 % in 2012 (IFRC 12/10/19, FAO 2012/04/12, Reuters 2012/06/13).
- In some parts of the country, unemployment has more than quadrupled, according to Government statistics from December 2011. Hardest hit was the northeast of the country: in Al-Rakka, unemployment rose from 7 to 22%; in Al-Hasakeh, from 15 to 39%; in Deir-ez-Zor from 13 to 24%; and in Homs from 7 to 17%. The numbers are likely to have increased further as economic sanctions and violence have disrupted livelihood opportunities (FAO 12/09/24).

- Of Syria's 14 governorates, WFP is providing the highest number of food rations in Aleppo, Homs, and Rural Damascus, as these areas host the largest concentration of IDPs. IDPs have mostly lost their livelihoods and due to the high unemployment, inflation and insecurity, will face difficulties to recover these, and will therefore remain vulnerable to food insecurity.
- Poor pastoral and agro-pastoral households with small flocks have already lost or sold significant number of animals. Due to limited access to grazing areas and high animal feed prices, small holders are at risk of being destitute by the end of the winter (OCHA 12/11/26).
- Across the country, agricultural production, which officially accounts for 20% of Syria's gross domestic product, continues, despite a shortage of seasonal labourers who once flocked to work in the fields during the harvest period. The last forecast from an Agriculture Ministry official in May 2012 put wheat production at an above average 3.7 million tonnes and barley at 843,000 tonnes. Current estimates however indicate a well below-average cereal harvest in 2012 due to the escalation of conflict and inadequate rains. A combination of drought conditions, insecurity and rising input and fuel prices has also jeopardised prospects for the 2012 winter cereal crops (AlertNet 12/12/14, FAO 12/09/24).
- The Government has not acknowledged a wheat shortage in the country. It has stated that the bread crisis is due to the shut-down of many mills - including 23 in the embattled northern city of Aleppo alone - and challenges transporting flour. The country's normal production of 8-9,000 tons of flour per day has been reduced by 40 % (IRIN 12/12/13).
- Insufficient rains affected major rain fed crops in Al-Hasakeh and Al-Rakka in the north and northeast while insufficient input supply and high labour costs affected agricultural activities.
- Furthermore, fuel shortages have contributed to a poor harvest, as fuel is used to operate irrigation pumps and other agricultural equipment (USAID 2012/10/12).
- In 2012, given the poor outlook for domestic cereal production, the cereal import requirement - mainly wheat for food use and maize and barley for feed - in marketing year 2012/13 (July/June) may reach more than 5 million tonnes, almost two million tonnes more than the previous year. The Syrian Arab Republic normally relies heavily on food imports amounting to almost half of the total domestic utilization (FAO 12/09/24).

Access and Food Availability

Availability

- Cross-border trade is on-going and most basic food items are still available in the markets with notable exceptions for periods of time in specific areas, however at higher prices. In areas of fighting, shortages of food commodities such as bread are common. In these areas access to the market is often curtailed (AlertNet 12/12/06).
- Bread unavailability is increasing due to a shortage of fuel affecting output, damage to bakeries, and increased demand from newly displaced populations (OCHA 2012/12/10).
- Scarcity and inflated black market prices have also reduced availability of the two essentials of fuel in major Syrian cities. Diesel, cooking gas, and petroleum have disappeared. If fuel can be found, its price has reached inaccessible levels on the black market with the total absence of regulating agencies. The fuel crisis has in turn led to an electricity shortage affecting people's food security and health (Aalakhbar 12/12/11).
- In addition to lack of food availability and restricted market access, it is reported that military forces deliberately target bakeries, in what appears to be official policy to starve rebel areas into submission (Guardian 12/12/13). On October 23, shelling by SARG forces destroyed a bakery in an opposition-held neighbourhood, killing approximately 20 people and wounding more than 30 others, according to international media reports (USAID 12/10/25).
- In Aleppo, bread is reportedly subject to theft. The strategic supply of wheat in the city's major silos was being stolen from railroads or highways (Aalakhbar 12/12/11).
- At the end of November, flour was hard to find even in the markets of the capital Damascus, one of the least affected areas of the country. Rebel groups have reportedly begun negotiating with the authorities to ensure the supply of basic commodities in the most affected areas. The civil revolutionary council in the northern town of Al-Bab and its surroundings reported that it had signed an agreement with the Governor of Aleppo to trade wheat stored in rebel-controlled silos for flour, fuel and heating oil from Government areas (IRIN 12/12/13). In August, international media sources reported that opposition groups had taken control of wheat warehouses in Aleppo's suburbs to maintain the supply of bread to bakeries in the opposition-held areas of the governorate (USAID 12/10/25).
- Conditions are especially dire in the northern city of Aleppo, where violence among civilians has been reported while trying to access flour (AlertNet 12/12/14). General violence and insecurity is further restricting access to markets in Aleppo.
- Queues at Government-subsidized shops are common and even families not directly affected by the violence are reported to approach aid agencies in need of food (African Press International 12/12/13).

- Across rural Syria, the markets have adapted to the conflict situation, supplying foodstuffs to now isolated communities. Rural residents are not able to get goods from the city and are therefore relying on new traders who are buying directly from farmers and selling in local villages (AlertNet 12/08/29).
- On-going conflict continues to affect food security in Syria, particularly in the country's northeast regions, where the price of staple goods remains high and an increasing number of food items are no longer available in markets (USAID 12/10/25).

Inflation

- The conflict has severely impacted Syria's economy, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as the rural and urban poor. Following the evolving unrest, the economy contracted by 3.4 % in 2011. While the Government expects a growth between 0 and 2% for 2012, estimates predict a large contraction of over 8% (FAO 12/09/24).
- The economy continues to be under pressure from international sanctions which include an embargo on oil exports as well as restrictions on international trade, investment and financial transactions. Although borders have remained open, imports of agricultural commodities to the Syrian Arab Republic are affected by inability to finance imports (FAO 12/09/24).
- According to data from the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics, the country's year-on-year inflation rate stood at 36% in July 2012 compared to 30% in April 2012, mainly driven by sharp increases in food prices and by fuel shortages that are impacting transportation costs (IFRC 12/10/19, GIEWS 2012/04/12, Reuters 2012/06/13).
- Prices of bread and cereals, major staples in the local diet, increased sharply with a year-on-year inflation rate of about 34% in July 2012 (FAO 12/09/24, IFRC 12/10/19, GIEWS 2012/04/12, Reuters 2012/06/13).

Food Prices

- In areas affected by fighting, food prices are reported to have almost doubled since the beginning of the conflict. High food prices in June 2012 have increased by an additional 20% or more (WFP 12/11/15, AlertNet 12/12/14). In some places prices are reported to have soared 300 to 500% (AlertNet 12/12/14).
- Compared to the third quarter of 2012, wheat flour and sugar prices increased by 15 and 8% respectively in the last quarter due to disruptions in local supply chains. This is expected to worsen as the conflict continues. The Government is reported to have reserves to import the necessary food and non-food commodities, however at a high cost (IRIN 12/12/13).
- The Government considers bread to be a red line and has been subsidising it to keep the prices low. The official price of one kilogram of subsidized bread was set by the Government at SP8 (\$0.13), while barley and cattle feed is SP20 (\$0.33). However, the Government's fiscal capacity to support producer and consumer

subsidy schemes has come under severe strain following the economic downturn (FAO 12/09/24) and it is not able to sustain the price level (AlertNet 12/12/06).

- State bakery owners are reported to sell their subsidized shares of flour to privately owned bakeries at three times the price in addition to their sales of extra subsidized mazot, or fuel, given to them at merely SP9 or \$0.15 per kilogram (Alakhbar 12/12/11).
- In **Aleppo**, the price of unsubsidised bread, if available at all, is 50 % higher than in other governorates, having reached SP250 for 1kg compared to SP120 before as the population is now dependent on private bakeries. Bread made with subsidised flour costs SP75 (\$1), up from SP15 a few weeks ago but it is rarely available (AlertNet 12/12/14; IRIN 12/12/13; AlertNet 12/12/06; OCHA 12/12/10) 70% of the people in the city are reportedly unable to afford bread at any price (NPR 12/12/14).
- In **Damascus**, the price of eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables has risen dramatically (IRIN 12/12/13).
- The price of vegetable oil increased nearly 90 % since September 2012 (USAID 12/11/21).

Prices for non-food commodities

- Syria's oil and gas production has shifted from export to largely domestic consumption as a result of embargos on its exports by its biggest pre-conflict customers. Insecurity has also taken a mounting toll on the oil output (AFP 12/12/01).
- Petroleum rose by four times its official price and mazot by eight times. A bottle of cooking gas is now 10 times its set price at SP4,000 (\$67) (Alakhbar 12/12/11). Cooking fuel is also in short supply, selling on the black market with a 400 % rise (WFP 12/11/15, AlertNet 12/09/24).
- The lives of Syrians across the country are increasingly affected by lack of fuel supplies and electricity cuts. Electricity cuts have become more frequent in the capital Damascus. Such blackouts impact the operations of health facilities and negatively affect people's access to food and heating (OCHA 12/12/10). Amid growing inflation, commodity prices have significantly increased and rent prices have tripled in recent months, forcing families to sell off their resources to meet basic needs.
- As winter approaches, the humanitarian situation is likely to worsen. As people are no longer able to purchase essential items such as fuel, heating and electricity. The situation is particularly difficult for those seeking refuge in shelters that lack adequate insulation from the cold and humidity (OCHA 12/10/31).
- The fuel crisis is more prominent in Damascus and has affected public and private transportation. More than one and a half million people visit the capital daily, requiring various types of transportation, which mostly run on diesel (Alakhbar 12/12/11).

Coping Mechanisms

- Poor farmers and herders were badly affected by dry climatic conditions in 2011 which resulted in a poor harvest. One of their main coping strategies was to move to urban centres in search for casual work. The upsurge of insecurity and movement constraints has interrupted this mechanism. Some have seen their household income decrease by more than 90% in certain locations (FAO). As a result, many are selling assets, borrowing money or reducing their food stock-piles, thereby further increasing their vulnerability (ECHO 12/12/02).
- Many Syrians are without work and often have to decide between buying heating fuel or food. Some families have begun cutting trees or even furniture to use as firewood (AlertNet 12/12/14).
- Vulnerable Syrians, who lack the resources to pay high food prices, are increasingly relying on negative food-related coping strategies, such as reducing the quantity and quality of meals (USAID 12/11/21).
- Subsistence economy in rural areas has in many cases allowed people to produce food to meet their own needs. However, the current crisis is reversing a decade-long migration pattern of rural residents moving to cities like Damascus and Aleppo, which is exacerbating a wealth gap and disrupting traditional coping mechanisms, as many are now fleeing violence in the cities and returning to villages (AlertNet 12/12/14).

Protection

Priority Concerns

- Both the Syrian Government and opposition groups have reportedly perpetrated gross human rights violations. Human rights violations have grown in number, pace and scale.
- The Syrian Government has been accused of using explosive weapons such as cluster munitions and incendiary bombs in populated areas.
- Extrajudicial executions and ill-treatment of detainees, including torture, is widespread.
- Since mid-2012, religious minorities have increasingly fled to neighbouring countries.
- Gender Based Violence is a large concern and refugees cite rape as one of the primary reasons for fleeing Syria.
- Child recruitment, targeting of schools and exposure to unexploded ordnance and explosives make children particularly vulnerable.
- As sectarian violence increases, minorities such as Alawite communities are increasingly at risk of reprisal attacks.

Human rights violations

- Widespread human rights violations committed by Syrian Government security forces and officials include extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings of civilians, enforced disappearances, use of torture, and arbitrary detentions. Government allied “shabiha” militias and snipers have been deployed to attack communities, committing large-scale massacres in several towns. For instance, troops swept into the town of Daraa on 25 August, killing at least 320 people, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (R2P Monitor 2012/09/15, HRW 2012/09/17; UNHRC 2012/09/17). Although the vast majority of the human rights abuses documented have been committed by the state’s armed forces and pro-Government shabiha militias, abuses have also been committed by armed opposition groups. Violations include extrajudicial executions and ill-treatment of detainees (R2P Monitor 2012/09/15).
- Mobility is restricted by the large amount of checkpoints throughout the country, particularly for men of fighting age. All men aged 18-42 are banned from traveling outside Syria without prior authorization. There are reports of people from specific areas being unable to cross checkpoints (AFP 2012/11/08).

Armed violence

- Rebel fighters have made gains across the country in the last months and between July and December, fighting spread to all 14 Governorates. More than 44,000 people have been killed since the start of the conflict in March 2011, including more than 30,000 civilians. Since mid-2012, heavy fighting has taken place in the capital Damascus, following a major operation launched by the Government to prevent rebels from advancing on the capital. Although the Syrian Arab Republic is a party to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol I, Government forces are indiscriminately bombing and shelling presumed anti-Government areas. Indiscriminate attacks violate the principle of distinction between combatants and civilians as codified in the Geneva Conventions. (Al Jazeera 2012/12/18, Al Jazeera 2012/12/08, Reuters 2012/12/10, Handicap International 2012/11/28, Amnesty 2012/09/19, ICBL 2012/11/29, AFP 2012/12/19).
- Syria’s air force is reportedly using cluster bombs on populated areas across Syria. Syria’s army, however, issued a statement denying it was using cluster bombs and saying it did not possess such weapons. Syria has not ratified a 2008 convention banning cluster bombs that has been adopted by 109 countries (HRW 2012/10/15, HRW 2012/10/23).
- The Syrian military has used air-delivered incendiary bombs in at least four locations across Syria since mid-November 2012: Daraa in Damascus, Maarat al-Numan in Idlib, Babila in Damascus, and Quseir in Homs. Incendiary weapons can contain any number of flammable substances, including napalm, thermite, or white phosphorus and are designed to set fire to objects or to cause burn injuries (HRW 2012/12/12).
- There is international concern on possible use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Government, following reports that the weapons have been moved and could be prepared for use in response. However, the Syrian Government stated that it would not use chemical weapons against its own people. The Government warned that rebels could use chemical weapons, referring to a Syrian-Saudi Chemicals Company factory which was taken over by militants from the jihadist Al-Nusra Front (AFP 2012/12/08, Reuters 2012/12/04).
- The Syrian Government is the only Government in the world which has used antipersonnel landmines in 2012, including in border areas, thereby preventing civilians from leaving the country (ICBL 2012/11/29).
- Opposition groups have increased their attacks upon pro-Government forces and are making use of heavy weapons. In recent months, armed opposition factions appear to have embraced more radical guerrilla tactics, such as suicide bombings (AFP 2012/12/13, CFCIC 2012/12).
- As a result of the broad range of weapons used, many residential areas are littered by explosive remnants of war, posing a threat to their inhabitants, even during breaks in the fighting (Handicap International 2012/11/28, UN 2012/12/14).

Detention

- Thousands of suspected opponents of the Government have been arrested in Syria since pro-reform protests broke out in February 2011 and many, if not most, are believed to have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated. By the beginning of November at least 700 cases nationwide were document in which detainees held in Syrian Government detention facilities have been tortured to death. Methods of torture include sexual abuse, beatings, and use of electric shock devices. Detainees have routinely been held incommunicado (AFP 2012/10/31, HRW 2012/08/14).
- With many suspected activists detained and its prisons overflowing, the regime resorted to using a range of public facilities for detentions which are inadequate to host a large number of prisoners, such as football stadiums (Amnesty International 2012/12/18).
- Opposition parties have also been accused of ill-treatment of detainees, including the torture and killing of captured soldiers and shabiha militia members as well as the abduction and killing of people known or suspected to support or work with the Government and its forces, or the taking of civilians as hostages to try to negotiate prisoner swaps (Amnesty International 2012/12/18).
- Detainees in opposition-run detention facilities reported that FSA fighters and officials in charge of detention facilities had tortured and mistreated them, in particular by beating them on the soles of their feet. Abuse appeared to be more prevalent during the initial stages of detention, before the detainees were transferred to civilian opposition authorities. The head of the Aleppo Governorate Revolutionary Council stated that the authorities do not execute or torture detainees, but that beating detainees on the soles of the feet was “permissible” because it did not cause injuries (HRW 2012/09/17).

Law enforcement

- In rebel-held areas, state judicial structures are replaced by civilian legal councils. In some areas, legal responsibilities are taken up by a council of elders, a committee which is traditionally part of the community based conflict resolution mechanisms. Legal practices differ from region to region, with some councils relying exclusively on Sharia law, and others applying a mixture of Sharia and Syrian criminal law. However, descriptions of the trials by detainees and members of the judicial councils indicate that some trials do not meet international due process standards, including the right to legal representation and the opportunity to prepare one's defence (HRW 2012/09/17).
- FSA fighters have assumed the role of a de-facto police force in areas controlled by opposition groups. Cases of abuse have given rise to accountability concerns, with reports of ill-treatment and torture of detainees and extrajudicial or summary executions (IRIN 2012/09/26, Al Jazeera 2012/11/03).

- Prisoners detained in Government facilities have reportedly been referred to Military Field Courts, which does not allow for the right to defence or for appeals to verdicts and whose proceedings are conducted in secret (Amnesty International 2012/12/18).

Vulnerable groups

Minorities

- Syria's civil war is increasingly turning into a sectarian conflict with Sunni rebels fighting against Government forces supported by the country's religious and ethnic minorities. The UN anti-genocide envoy warned that minority groups in Syria are at risk of major reprisal attacks. There have been reports of anti-Government armed groups attacking Alawites and other pro-Government minority communities. For instance, an attack on a Syrian village killed or injured as many as 200 members of President Bashar al-Assad's Alawite minority sect, activists said, but it was unclear who was behind the assault (Reuters 2012/12/11, Col 2012/12/20, R2P Monitor 2012/09/15, Reuters 2012/12/21).
- Some minority communities, notably the Alawites and Christians, have formed armed self-defence groups to protect their neighbourhoods from anti-Government fighters by establishing checkpoints around these areas (Col 2012/12/20).
- Syria's Armenian Orthodox, and other Christian and Druze communities have sought protection by aligning themselves with the Government, with the consequence that they have come under attack from anti-Government armed groups. The Armenian Orthodox community resides mainly in Aleppo governorate. The Armenian Church St. Hakob in Aleppo was burned down, which increased the atmosphere of fear and distress among the Armenian community and about 7,000 Syrian Armenians fled to Armenia (Col 2012/12/20, ACTA 2012/11/09).
- The Kurds, who live predominantly in the north-eastern al-Hasakah governorate, have clashed with Government forces and anti-Government armed groups over control of territory (Col 2012/12/20).

Palestinian refugees

- Before the start of the conflict, there were around 500,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria. Since June 2012, Palestinian refugees have been increasingly involved in the conflict, with heavy fighting in the Palestinian district of Yarmouk in Damascus between Syrian rebels, together with a brigade of Palestinian fighters known as Liwa al-Asifah (Storm Brigade) and Government forces, supported by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLP-GC) (UNHCR 2012/10/18).

- According to reports, the Jordanian authorities have forcibly returned some newly arriving Palestinians from Syria and threatened others with deportation. Jordanian authorities have also arbitrarily detained Palestinians fleeing Syria in a refugee holding centre without any options for release other than return to Syria. The general secretary of the Interior Ministry of Jordan implied that Palestinians trying to enter without identity documents would be denied entry (HRW 2012/07/04).

Iraqi refugees

- Around one million Iraqi refugees were residing in Syria before the start of the conflict in March 2011. Instability in Syria has allowed Iraqis to try to settle old scores with fellow nationals that had taken refuge in Syria, with a series of kidnappings occurring in recent months, particularly in Sayeda Zeinab District of Rural Damascus (IRIN 2012/09/11).

Other refugees

- Syria has long hosted thousands of refugees from other countries, including Afghanistan (1,500) and Somalia (2,650). These refugees are particularly vulnerable (IRIN 2012/09/11, UNHCR 2012/12).

Migrants

- Stranded female domestic workers face many challenges due to gaps in legal mechanisms, confiscation of passports, an exploitative sponsorship system, unpaid wages and abuse (IOM 2012/11/01).

Child protection

- UNICEF estimates about 1.1 million children, including 262,767 children under the age of five, have been affected by the conflict in Syria (OCHA 2012/11/26).
- Children in particular have been the specific targets of abuse including killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals.
- Armed opposition groups fighting in Syria are using children for combat and other military purposes. Children as young as 14 are serving opposition brigades, transporting weapons and supplies and acting as lookouts. Children as young as 16 years old carry arms and take combat roles against Government forces (HRW 2012/11/29, HRW 2012/10/15, UN SRSG 2012/12/18).
- Particularly children face a growing threat from unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war (OCHA 2012/12/03).

Criminality

- There are increasing numbers of reports of widespread looting and theft, car-jacking and kidnappings for ransom including sectarian and politically motivated kidnappings. According to the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, between 2,000 and 3,000 people have been kidnapped across Syria since March 2011 (AFP 2012/09/19, IRIN 2012/09/11, WFP 2012/01/09).

Gender Based Violence

- Rape and other forms of sexual violence are rampant in Syria. Women and girls are being targeted for rape. Armed actors routinely enter homes and rape women and girls in front of family members, sometimes killing them afterwards. Women are also raped and tortured while in prison. Refugees cite the prevalence of rape as one of their primary reasons for fleeing Syria. The situation is exacerbated by the lack of light sources caused by the fuel crisis (AI Akhbar 2012/12/11, Refugee International 2012/11/16, OCHA 2012/11/07).
- Survivors are extremely reluctant to report sexual violence or seek treatment because of stigma and strong social norms that treat rape as a dishonour to the family. Even if they seek help, survivors in Syria have very limited access to medical or psychological services (Refugee International 2012/11/16).
- Domestic violence is endemic in displaced communities within Syria and often increased by the stress and overcrowding of camps and apartments shared by multiple families (Refugee International 2012/11/16).
- Collective shelters provide limited privacy and increase the risk of gender and sexual-based violence. Women and girls who have been forced to flee to neighbouring countries are at risk of exploitation and trafficking (Refugee International 2012/11/16).
- Syrian women and girls are also coerced into early and forced marriages as households seek to decrease the number of family members competing for limited resources. Many families also coerce daughters who have been raped into marriage, in an attempt to preserve family honour (Refugee International 2012/11/16).

Health and Nutrition

Priority Concerns

- Access to health care services remains a problem. At least one in four public hospitals across the country is out of service and those still functioning are overwhelmed with patients. People are afraid to seek medical care because hospitals have become military targets
- There is a severe shortage of medicines and pharmaceutical products
- 250,000 IDPs urgently require winter items and access to basic health care
- The on-going violence causes growing mental health problems
- Lack of access to safe drinking water and appropriate sanitation has led to an increase in waterborne diseases
- Rural areas are particularly vulnerable due to the increased challenges involved with lack of communication and limited movement.

Access and coverage

- According to a recent report published by WHO, the main health priorities in Syria are: access to basic primary health care including access to medicines for chronic diseases, access to trauma care, strengthening of disease surveillance including early detection of outbreaks requiring action (EWARN), strengthened referral systems, improved health information systems, nutritional surveillance, and improved coordination (WHO, 11/26/12).
- The health situation on the ground is very serious and is deteriorating. Access to healthcare facilities for both patients and health-care providers remain the biggest obstacle to delivery, and reports are still coming in of shortages of supplies and staff. Many doctors have left the country, for instance in Homs, more than 50% of all doctors have left the city. In areas experiencing high levels of violence, there are severe staffing shortages in hospitals and other health facilities, with staff often unable to report to work (WHO, 11/26/12).
- WHO remains concerned about the security of health facilities and calls on all parties to ensure safe access (UN, 12/18/12). According to the ICRC President Peter Maurer, people in Syria are afraid to seek medical care because hospitals have become military targets (OCHA 11/29/12).
- Many hospitals and health care facilities across the country have been badly damaged and at least one in four public hospitals across the country is out of service. Those still functioning are overwhelmed with patients. There is also an acute shortage of transportation for referral services. Out of 520 ambulances, 304 have been damaged or are out of services (WHO, 11/26/12).

- Recent electricity blackouts across the country are impacting the operations of health facilities (OCHA, 12/12/12).
- Conditions in collective shelters continue to be dire. Following a recent visit to Homs, UNHCR and SARC estimate that about 250,000 IDPs urgently require access to basic health care (OCHA, 12/12/12).
- Syria is experiencing severe shortages of medicines and pharmaceutical products. Before the unrest started in March 2011, more than 90% of medicines in Syria were locally produced. The combined effects of economic sanctions, currency fluctuations, unavailability of hard currency, fuel shortages, and increases in operational costs have adversely affected the production of medicines and pharmaceutical products. The recent escalation in the conflict has resulted in substantial damage and closure of pharmaceutical plants and medical storage facilities, causing a critical shortage of life-saving medicines and supplies (WHO, 11/26/12).
- Having lived in the conflict for an extended period, many people, especially families with children, are in need of psychosocial support (IFRC 12/17/12).
- There are reports of growing mental health needs due to the on-going violence. Prior to the conflict there were only nine psychiatrists in Syria, and they have apparently all left the country. The Ministry of Health (MoH) has asked for assistance from WHO in undertaking an assessment of the mental health needs in heavily affected governorates. The health authorities at the governorate level report that the social part of the psycho-social support seems to be functioning well. There is, however, a concern that when people with mental problems have been identified, they are not receiving the necessary expert follow-up as there is no proper referral system in place for mental disorders, including for PTSD (WHO, 11/26/12).
- Access to safe drinking water and appropriate sanitation in affected areas has been interrupted, leading to an increased risk of waterborne diseases (WHO, 11/26/12).

Communicable diseases

- The unrest has created challenges in implementing the routine national immunization programme. The MoH reported that the national vaccination coverage for the first quarter of 2012 dropped from 95% to 80%. In September, MoH has reported that 132 out of 179 vaccination service vehicles have been destroyed. MoH has requested the assistance of WHO in delivering vaccines to the severely affected areas which it cannot reach (WHO, 11/26/12). A vaccination campaign targeting 2.5 million children between one and five, implemented by the MoH (with support of WHO and UNICEF) was launched on 26 November. Rural Damascus is thought to be one of the most challenging areas for the campaign, due to the extremely volatile security situation (UNICEF 12/7/12).

Nutrition

- Prior to the unrest, according to the 2009 Family Health Survey, 9.3% of children under the age of 5 were suffering from wasting, and 23% from stunting. According to a study the MoH conducted in 2007, 22.3% of children under five years of age had anaemia. The prolonged unrest has resulted in growing food insecurity, unhygienic living conditions, overcrowding, inaccessible or limited health care services and reduced immunization coverage for children under five years of age. These combined factors may have serious implications on the nutritional status of children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating women. Increasing concerns over the nutritional status of children living in collective centres, in particular micro-nutrient deficiencies are reported (OCHA, 11/26/12).
- Severe and acute malnutrition was seen during a WHO visit to Damascus in December, and a nutrition assessment is to be completed (UN, 12/18/12).
- In Syria, the rate of exclusive breast-feeding for six months has been consistently low (approximately 43%). At present, doctors and midwives are reporting an increasing numbers of women who wish to breast-feed their babies, mainly because they cannot afford infant formula. Due to the short stay in health facilities following delivery, help with initiation of breastfeeding is insufficient and there is no organized support for breastfeeding within the communities (WHO, 11/26/12).

Women and children

- Women and girls have reportedly been victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence during the conflict, including during detention.
- 25% (625,000) of the affected population are women aged 15-49 years. 150,000 deliveries are expected within the next six months. Based on service providers preliminary evidence, the estimated Caesarean rate of all deliveries is 44% (15% higher than average), due to the concerns of pregnant women as well as difficulty in accessing services (OCHA 11/26/12).
- Reports by local Syrian health officials indicate that the on-going violence continues to affect infant care in Syrian hospitals. There is a shortage of incubators, and according to UNICEF, the MoH has indicated that 400 incubators were needed across the country. The stress of the conflict is having a particularly damaging effect on expectant mothers. Citing anecdotal reports from health workers, UNICEF stated that many women are miscarrying, while others are delivering early, requiring a greater number of Caesarean sections (UN, 11/2/12).

WASH

Priority Concerns

- The escalation of violence has impacted Syria's water and sanitation infrastructure, affecting the supply of water. Shortages of chlorination products have led to restrictions in the delivery of potable water.
- Water shortages and hygiene concerns have been reported in collective IDP shelters.
- As a result of the constant escalation of violence, Syria's infrastructure has been considerably degraded and essential public services, such as the supply of water, are severely affected (ICRC, 12/17/12). Access to safe drinking water and appropriate sanitation in affected areas has been interrupted, leading to an increased risk of waterborne diseases.
- Shortages of chlorine gas and sodium chloride in some governorates have led to restrictions on the delivery of potable water, especially to rural areas. Due to such shortages, insufficient quantities of water are being treated. WHO reports that there is only one supplier for these essential chemicals left in the country and prices of supplies are reported to have risen five-fold (OCHA, 12/12/12).
- WASH shortages are reported in most of the collective shelters. Hygiene conditions in these shelters are poor due to overcrowding, limited water supply and poor access to basic hygiene items (ECHO, 2012/12/02, OCHA, 11/26/12).
- Community shelters lack adequate water and sanitation conditions as well as waste disposal systems with no collection of garbage in several weeks (ECHO, 2012/12/02).

Shelter& NFI

Priority Concerns

- There is a lack of information on the total number of IDPs in Syria residing in public shelters. Nevertheless the needs for both IDPs in public and private shelters are high, especially with the onset of the winter season. Lack of heating, adequate water and sanitation facilities, waste disposal and non-food items will increase the risk of diseases and protection concerns for IDPs
- Average temperature conditions are expected to stay below 10 degree Celsius until the end of January 2013. Average rainfall conditions are expected to rise in January (52mm) before starting to decrease in February 2013 (26mm)

Damage to Shelter

- In Aleppo, satellite imagery shows that numerous buildings are completely destroyed and many buildings show signs of damage. In addition, debris and roadblocks are common in many parts of the city (UNOSAT 12/09/27).

Shelter Conditions

- In August 2012, authorities estimated that countrywide, approximately one million people have sought shelter in public buildings, including in over 350 schools (IOM 12/08/29). As of 5 December, more than 2,100 schools and other public buildings were hosting IDPs as community shelters; many lack adequate heating, sanitation and winterization (OCHA 12/12/05). However, no numbers are available on the total number of IDPs residing in schools.
- According to OCHA, tens of thousands of IDPs are residing in damaged buildings and tents unfit for winter conditions (USAID 12/10/12).
- Cold living conditions, irrespective of whether people sought refuge with other families, in collective shelters, or by renting accommodation, persist due to a lack of fuel and electricity as well as depleted financial resources. Where fuel and electricity are available, many Syrians lack the financial resources to pay for them, as conflict and market disruptions have resulted in increased prices.
- While schools hosting IDPs generally are equipped with heating systems, OCHA reports that reduced access to fuel may have an affect on schools' ability to remain heated (OCHA 12/09/28, Malteser 12/11/02, UNHCR 12/11/30).
- Most partially completed public and private buildings hosting IDPs in Syria lack heating systems, sewage systems, and access to electricity (USAID 12/09/28).

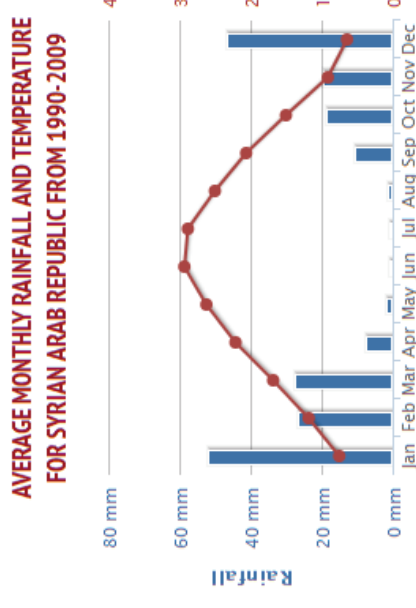
- In collective shelters, IDPs only have access to water in limited quantities, as facilities meant for e.g. day-time school use are permanently shared by a large number of people. Refugees hosted by families or renting accommodation are often living in small spaces shared by at least 15-20 people, which reduces the cost of living but does not address the continued vulnerability of displaced families unable to meet basic needs (DRC 12/11/27).
- In Aleppo, over 64,000 people are now sheltering in public buildings in Aleppo city, such as mosques, schools, public parks and university premises, and about 200,000 in Rural Aleppo (WFP 12/08/25).

Non Food Items

- Many of the IDPs are staying in public buildings or schools and left their homes with no or limited belongings. IDPs are typically in need of mattresses, blankets, winter clothes, hygiene kits and cooking sets (OCHA 12/11/29).
- UNHCR has visited some private houses in Al-Nabek, a town between Damascus and Homs, where IDPs rent rooms for 1,000 to 2,500 Syrian Pounds (about US\$ 14-35) per month. The assessment revealed that IDPs in these houses live in poor hygienic conditions and lack essential items, such as clothes and kitchen sets (OCHA 12/11/29).
- UNICEF reported that at least 75,000 children required blankets and warm clothes in Syria as of November 11. UNICEF notes that many displaced children are residing in shelters that are not sufficiently winterized and lack access to basic services, such as health facilities (USAID 12/11/21).

Weather forecast

- Temperatures in December and January in the Syrian Arab Republic are expected to go below 10 degree Celsius, as represented in the graph.
- Rainfall conditions are expected to be above 40mm (Climate Change Knowledge Portal, World Bank group).



Syria: Number of IDPs residing in Syrian cities and number of registered Syrian refugees (as at 20 December 2012)

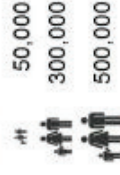


Registered Syrian Refugees

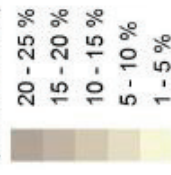
Note that the number of refugees only refers to those that are registered with UNHCR or are awaiting registration. The number of unregistered refugees is unknown.

Registered Syrian Refugees

Number of IDPs & Refugees



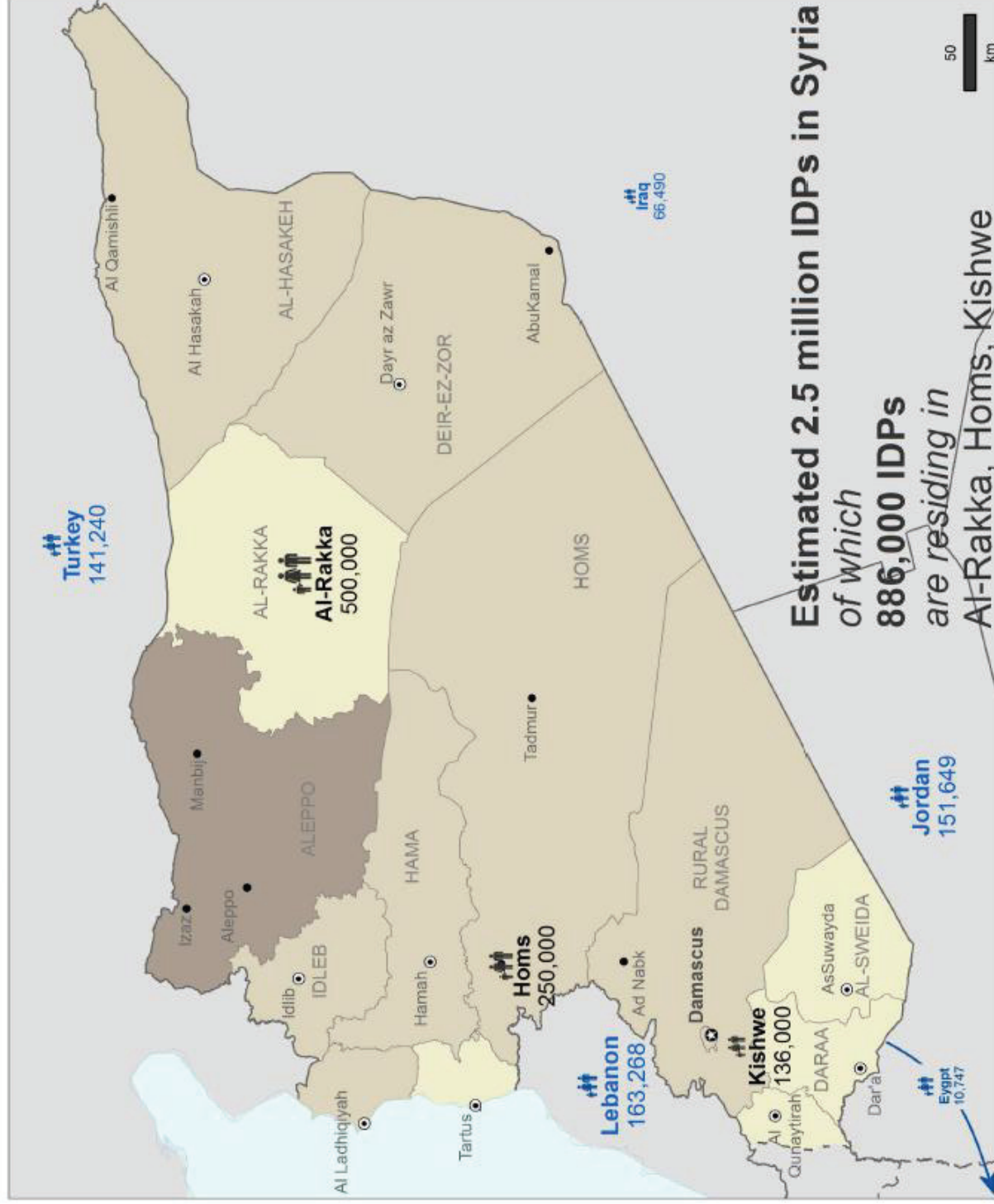
Population per Governorate % of national population (Census 2004)



Created: 20 Dec 2012

Data Sources: Natural Earth, GAUL, ReliefWeb, UNHCR, Al Jazeera

The depiction and use of boundaries, names and associated data shown here do not imply endorsement or acceptance by ACAPS or MapAction.



Definitions for the humanitarian profile

Affected

The number of affected refers to people affected by the violence in Syria. The number of affected can be divided in two groups: those non-displaced and those displaced.

Non-Displaced

The **non-displaced** include all those within Syria that have been, directly or indirectly, affected by the conflict, including those who have been injured, have lost access to essential services, and those whose vulnerability has increased due to the impact of the unrest on livelihoods and access to essential services (OCHA 2012/06/05). In addition, this group includes the **host community**, the people who are part of a community or family receiving affected people. Due to the stress placed on the host families and communities, they are considered part of the humanitarian caseload. As there is currently no information available on the needs of the host community, this group is currently excluded from this humanitarian profile.

Displaced

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are those persons or groups of persons who are residing in Syria but who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict (OCHA 2004).

Refugees and Asylum Seekers are those who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside Syria, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UN 1951). For the purpose of this document, the category 'refugees' includes those registered, awaiting registration as well as those unregistered. Within this group, both the Iraqi and Palestinian refugees are in a specifically vulnerable position, both within Syria as outside.

Others of Concern - Persons who have been displaced by the emergency and form part of the humanitarian caseload, but do not fall into either of the above categories (e.g. migrants, returnees).

Key resources

- European Commission Humanitarian Aid department, ECHO Factsheet Syria, 10 December 2012
<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/echo-factsheet-syria-10-december-2012>
- Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan for Syria (1 January -30 June 2013)
<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/humanitarian-assistance-response-plan-syria-1-january-30-june-2013>
- Syria Regional Response Plan (January to June 2013)
<http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/syria-regional-response-plan-january-june-2013>
- UNRWA, Syria crisis situation update, 19 December 2012
<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/unrwa-syria-crisis-situation-update-19-december-2012>
- UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response Data Portal
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>
- UN Human Rights Council, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria: Periodic Update, 20 December 2012
<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/independent-international-commission-inquiry-syria-periodic-update-20>

Methodology – This desk study presents estimations of scale, severity and likely impact of a disaster. It aims to inform decision making for preparedness and emergency response and intends to complement and integrate assessment-related data from other agencies. Feedback to improve the DNA is welcome (dna@acaps.org). ECB (www.ecbproject.org), ACAPS (www.acaps.org) and MapAction (www.mapaction.org) thank agencies and NGOs who have shared data and analysis.

Disclaimer – Information provided is provisional as it has not been possible to independently verify field reports. As this report covers highly dynamic subject, utility of the information may decrease with time.

References – Please note that all sources are hyperlinked (in brackets) and that an accompanying glossary is available [here](#).